

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1,48

CONSUMER TIME

R- 217

C762

KEEP FOOD PRICES DOWN

NETWORK: NBC

DATE: October 28, 1944

ORIGIN: WRC

TIME: 12:15-12:30 PM- ENT

(Produced by the Office of Distribution of the War Food Administration, this script is for reference only and may not be broadcast without special permission. The title CONSUMER TIME is restricted to network broadcast of this program...presented for more than eleven years in the interest of consumers.)

ooooooooOooooooooo

1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE....MONEY IN TILL

2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!

3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER....CLOSE DRAWER

4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes, the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available as a public service for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME, by the War Food Administration. And here are Mrs. Freyman and Johnny.

5. FREYMAN: Johnny, when I think of inflation...I always think of having to push a wheelbarrow-full of money to the store to buy a loaf of bread.

6. JOHN: You're not far from the truth, there, Mrs. Freyman. It's happened in many countries. A pretty terrible thing to contemplate.

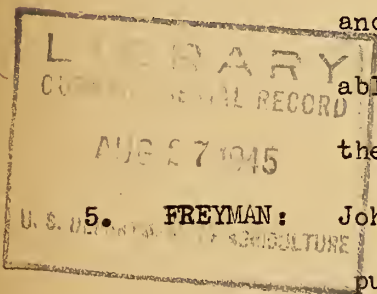
7. FREYMAN: That's why, of course, we get bombarded all the time about not paying more than ceiling prices for food.

8. JOHN: That's it. That's one thing which helps cause inflation. Now you know, since ceiling prices came in, the prices of food have been kept down. They're much lower than there were in the last war. But now...here's an alarming fact.

9. FREYMAN: What, Johnny?

10. JOHN: If we're not on guard every minute, they can begin to go up...and go up fast. Then we'll be headed for a terrible crash.

11. FREYMAN: Just like after the last war.



12. JOHN: With millions unemployed...thousands upon thousands of business failures... Now listen to this. Experts say the consumer...that's you, Mrs. Freyman...
13. FREYMAN: That's you too, Johnny.
14. JOHN: It's really you mostly, in this case, because almost all the food-buying in the country is done by women.
15. FREYMAN: All right, then, what about we the consumers, Johnny?
16. JOHN: Well, the experts say that the consumer is sort of losing "fire and enthusiasm" over preventing inflation. You know, they're getting lackadaisical on the subject.
17. FREYMAN: Oh! Is that why this big Grocer-Consumer Campaign is on, Johnny?
18. JOHN: Sure that's why your grocer is reminding you about ceiling prices... that's why he has his price list displayed so prominently. Your grocer expects you to waggle your finger at him if you think a price is too high or something.
19. FREYMAN: And he's supposed to waggle his finger right back at us...if we don't look at the price list before we buy?
20. JOHN: Yes. It's strictly a cooperative proposition...and some towns in the USA are really plugging into the campaign for all they're worth.
21. FREYMAN: Is that so, Johnny?
22. JOHN: Sure...they're determined to keep food prices down. For instance let's just take a little town...any town...call it Centerboro, USA. Let's sneak in the back door of a grocer's house...and find him talking...(FADING)...to his wife.
23. ELSIE: (PROJECTING) George! What are you doing, George?
24. GEORGE: I'm trying to get this on straight, why?
25. ELSIE: Get what on straight?
- 25A. GEORGE: This? My halo. There, how does it look?
26. ELSIE: Wherever in the world did you find a halo...and why for goodness sake are you wearing it?

Journal of Management Studies, 19(6), 707-728.

1891

27. GEORGE: I'm George, the Saintly grocer today, sweetheart. I posted all my ceiling prices. Right in plain view of everybody.
28. ELSIE: Why George, you old darling.
29. GEORGE: Did I do like Mr. Dimwhistle in his grocery store...and paste them up behind the flypaper where nobody ever goes? No! Did I do the way Rumtwiddles grocery did, and hang a punchboard over the list?
30. ELSIE: No.
31. GEORGE: What did I do?
32. ELSIE: What did you do?
33. GEORGE: I nailed my price ceiling list up on the ceiling.
34. ELSIE: And all the people went out of the store with a crick in their necks?
35. GEORGE: Not at all. See, first to get their attention, I put a sign on the screen door that said, "when you come in here, look at the ceiling", get it?
36. ELSIE: Oh yes, dear.
37. GEORGE: Then I put a big arrow on the post, pointing upward, and everybody looked up.
38. ELSIE: And?
39. GEORGE: And there they were. My prices. See, Elsie, that got their interest up. That got 'em interested. I mean, they remembered they should look at the prices.
40. ELSIE: George you're a genius.
41. GEORGE: Then, because I simply couldn't let them stand around looking at a price list on the ceiling, I just called their attention to the one hanging on the counter. Pretty good, eh?
42. ELSIE: You had one on the counter, too?
43. GEORGE: Oh, sure. One thing I feel about these price lists is that they're a good shopping reminder. Folks come in, look at the list and think of a lot of other things to buy.

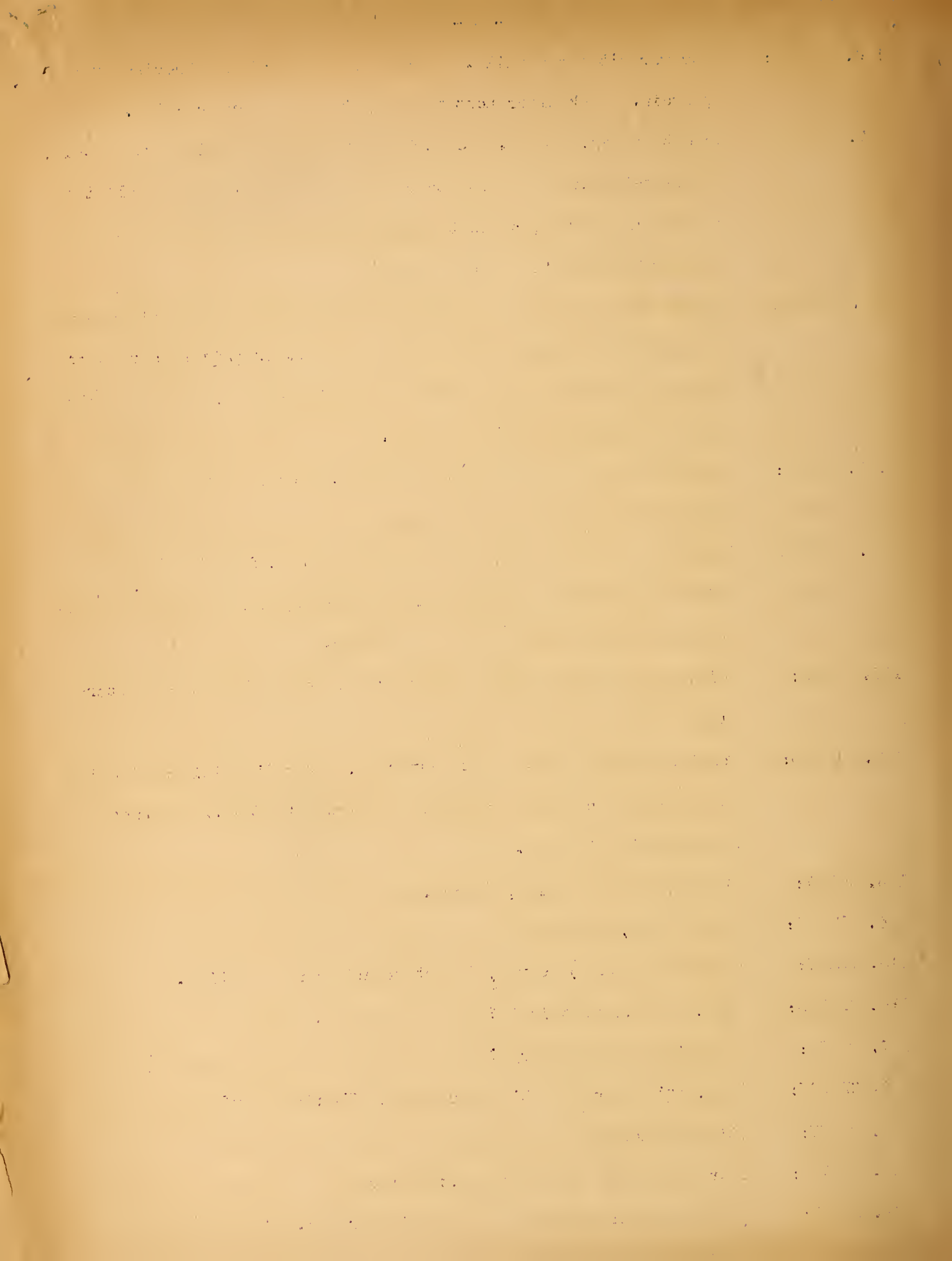
44. ELSIE: Who sent you that halo, the Government?
45. GEORGE: It's a little thing I picked up.
46. ELSIE: It's pretty...looks expensive.
47. GEORGE: Silver plated. Hard to get...they are, now.
48. ELSIE: How much did you pay for it, George?
49. GEORGE: Well, the man said there were only a couple left.
50. ELSIE: How much?
51. GEORGE: Well, they...I guess, well it retailed at about \$4.95.
52. ELSIE: \$4.95! For a \$2.95 halo! Two dollars too much. That's a black market price if I ever saw one. (FIRMLY) George....
53. GEORGE: (MEEKLY) Yes, dear.
54. ELSIE: You paid more than ceiling price for it.
55. GEORGE: (STILL MORE MEEKLY) Yes, dear...but I...
56. ELSIE: "But You" nothing. You're helping to bring on inflation, do you realize that? Do you remember what happened with your grocery store after the last war.
57. GEORGE: Yes, I do dear.
58. ELSIE: It was pretty rough, wasn't it.
59. GEORGE: (FADING) Oh...how well I remember... First there was the Armistice ...big time...plenty of celebrating...
60. SOUND: SCREAMING...WHOOPEING...MERRYMAKING...WHISTLES, HORNS, SHOUTING... ETC.....FADE AND HOLD UNDER...AND OUT.
61. GEORGE: (MUSING...FADING IN) Yes, I remember. Prices on food went down, right after the first world war. Industry was going back to peacetime production. Men were looking for jobs. (FADING) But then... less than two years later...June, 1920...prices suddenly shot sky-high.
62. WOMAN: (FAST) Well, I'll take ten pounds of sugar...four cans of peas... two loaves of bread...a can of peaches.. That sure is going to cost me plenty. But who cares. We got money, plenty of money. (FADE)

63. GEORGE: Prices on food went up and up and up. Remember, Elsie, how you used to say...(FADE)...
64. ELSIE: George! George this is wonderful! We're rich! Such high prices.. on everything. And what's more, everybody's paying them! (FADE)
65. GEORGE: Yes, we thought high prices on food were going to make us lots of dough.
66. ELSIE: (GLUM) But instead...the wholesale prices we had to pay kept going up and up, too.
67. GEORGE: We bought sugar one week, for instance...at one price. Next week, the price would be higher.
68. ELSIE: Finally, George...remember how old Mrs. Mac Monahenny would complain...
69. WOMAN: (OLD VOICE) George, I been dealing at your store for thirty years. Nowadays I get something fer one price, come back next week and it's something more. Every week, things get higher and higher. You must be making a stack of money that's all I've got to say. (FADING)
70. GEORGE: But we weren't making a stack of money. Actually, toward the end we often sold food for less than we paid for it.
71. ELSIE: Yes, less that we paid for it. So we began to lose money just like everyone else. Not even two years after the World War One was over.
72. GEORGE: Then also...just like everyone else, we'd been buying a whale of a lot. Thought the prices might go even higher, and we'd have to pay more. Thought the other fellow'd get it all...so we got busy and bought everything in sight.
73. ELSIE: Then, George...then in 1920...
74. SOUND: (THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION...REVERBERATION DIES DOWN AND SLOWLY OUT...)
75. ELSIE: 1920. And what had happened to us and our store...after the crash?

76. GEORGE: Our shelves were loaded with merchandise...we had bought at high prices.
77. ELSIE: We were lucky to get 30 cents on the dollar.
78. GEORGE: Like thousands of others, we were poor after 1920. Our friends lost their businesses...farmers lost their land...for some farmers, the depression that followed those inflationary prices lasted nearly twenty years.
79. ELSIE: All because people paid high prices. Those were bad times, George. And people could have prevented it, too.
80. GEORGE: Yep! (PHILOSOPHICAL SIGH) People could have prevented it. Well, I'm glad we live in Centerboro, USA, in 1944...where everybody's smart.
81. ELSIE: (DERIDING) Yes...smart.
82. GEORGE: Don't you reckon the folks in Centerboro's smart, Elise?
83. ELSIE: Oh...what do they know about inflation? What do they care? Why do lots of 'em trade over at the Dimwhistle's store? Because they know he don't pay no attention to ceiling prices.
84. GEORGE: Aw, now, Elsie. I just don't believe that's so. Now, I just don't. Folks in this town always seem mighty cooperative.
85. ELSIE: Oh, George you're too easy-going. You don't know.
86. GEORGE: Don't know? I ought to know...working there in the store you learn a lot about the folks as comes in and out all day.
87. ELSIE: Well...I've learned plenty myself. Just let me speak my piece first.
88. GEORGE: Well, speak it, Elsie.
89. ELSIE: Now, for instance, I was over at the study club the other day...before meeting time, I was helping Bessie make sandwiches. They were good sandwiches, George..(FADING) with plenty of tuna fish and ham.
90. BESSIE: Don't these look good, now Elsie? Here, try one.

91. ELSIE: Mmmmm! (MOUTHFUL) These are good, Bessie...where'd you get this ham?
92. BESSIE: Dimwhistle's. I had to pay plenty, but he had it all right.
93. ELSIE: What'd you pay for the ham, Bessie..?
94. BESSIE: Oh...t'wasn't so much...80 cents a pound. But I say it's worth it. After all, I don't have club meetings at my house everyday.
95. ELSIE: How can Dimwhistle get away with those high prices? Doesn't he have his ceiling prices posted?
96. BESSIE: (OFFHAND) Oh, I suppose so. But frankly I just don't bother. I'm nearsighted you know...(SUDDEN CATCH OF BREATH) Oh...of course... (NERVOUS LAUGH) I forgot...you're George's wife...shouldn't say that I did...(ETC...AD LIB NERVOUSLY)
97. ELSIE: Bess, I just simply don't see why you don't march right up to Dimwhistle and tell him he's charging over the ceiling.
98. BESSIE: Well...you see, honestly, Elsie, he just scares me stiff. With those big spectacles and that huge moustache...he glares at me all the time. I couldn't any more walk up to him in front of everybody and say he was violating the law...
99. ELSIE: You bet your life I'd do it.
100. BESSIE: Well you're nervy, Elsie, I just don't feel like I can tell Mr. Dimwhistle he's doing wrong. Oh, I know it's my duty and all...
101. ELSIE: I don't hesitate to light into George if he's charging higher prices.
102. BESSIE: Oh well...after all, George is your husband.
103. ELSIE: Well, Mr. Dimwhistle is Mrs. Dimwhistle's husband. What's terrifying about a grocer? (FADE) Don't light into him necessarily.... just lean over the counter and discuss it with him like you were discussing the weather. (FADE OUT)
104. GEORGE: (LAUGH) Then what'd she say, Elsie?
105. ELSIE: Well, she got fretful, and said well she'd do it...only prices didn't seem any too high to her.

106. GEORGE: They weren't for a while. They were low. But now they're creeping up again. Week after next they may be more than creeping.
107. ELSIE: Sure they may, George. We ought to know from the last war. Well, Bessie said why should she take it on herself to talk to all the grocers in the USA, since the Government was going to see to it that prices didn't go up, anyhow.
108. GEORGE: That's what she thinks. The Government and the whole United States Army can't keep food prices from going up...or prices on rent or clothes or furniture, for that matter...if your friend Bessie right here in Centerboro don't help out.
109. ELSIE: You sure have been reading the posters, George. Well, I told Bessie all that.
110. GEORGE: But then...that's Bessie. She's only one...and she'll learn. So'll Dimwhistle. See, Elsie like I was saying, people in Centerboro seem to be doing a lot of thinking.
111. ELSIE: Well, I guess you should ought to know, being there in the store all day.
112. GEORGE: For instance...Elsie. Just yesterday, after I'd finished tacking up my ceiling price lists, nice and neat, (FADES) ...in comes little Patty O'Giggle.
113. PATTY: (11 YEAR OLD) Morning, George.
114. GEORGE: Hello there, Patty.
115. PATTY: (CONFIDENTIALLY) George, I want to ask you a question.
116. GEORGE: Sure, honey...what is it?
117. PATTY: See this package, George?
118. GEORGE: Sure, it's almost as big as you are. What's in it?
119. PATTY: It's my poster.
120. GEORGE: Your poster. Might I ask what poster?
121. PATTY: We did them in school. Here. It's for you. To put anywhere you want.



122. GEORGE: (DOUBTFUL) Gee, thanks, Patty.
123. SOUND: RATTLING OF PAPER.
124. GEORGE: What does it say..."Brush your teeth four times a day and chew your glass of milk?"
125. PATTY: Don't laugh, George. Just open it and see.
126. SOUND: PAPER RATTLE OUT
127. GEORGE: (SURPRISE) We-e-ell! What do you know about this. Say, now Patty ...that's pretty as it can be.
128. PATTY: I'm glad you like it...a lot of us did them.
129. GEORGE: (READING) "Check the ceiling price list in your grocery store." That's fine.
130. PATTY: And read down at the bottom. Teacher said to put that on all of them.
131. GEORGE: "Don't buy another inflation". Uh...what's this picture, Patty?
132. PATTY: It's a dragon, silly.
133. GEORGE: (DOUBTFUL) Oh...I see...a dragon.
134. PATTY: And that's a lady buying him.
135. GEORGE: Uh huh. A pink lady buying a green dragon. Pretty colors, Patty ...(PAUSE)... Oh...now I get it. "Don't buy another inflation". The dragon is...
136. PATTY: He's inflation. You aren't supposed to buy it/^{by paying high prices.} (PAUSE AND FADE) Where are you going to hang my poster, George? (OUT)
137. ELSIE: (LAUGH) And did you hang it up, then?
138. GEORGE: You bet I hung it up. Right in the front window. But the thing that struck me, Elsie...was that the whole school was interested in making posters...on price ceiling price lists. The kids will take them home....and show their parents...or do like Patty did, and give it to their grocery store. The whole town's behind it.
139. ELSIE: Well, now...Centerboro is smarter than I thought.

140. GEORGE: Yes...looks to me like the whole town of Centerboro has gotten together about these price lists. Yesterday afternoon about 4 o'clock, a bunch of ladies came in...like they'd just been to club meeting. They had their hats on and weren't carrying no baskets nor babies...nor nothing and they were chattering like magpies. They marched up to my price list..."Here it is", says one of them, "right out in plain sight". "Sure it's in plain sight", I says, "what'd you expect, I'd have it stuffed in my pocket?" Then another one of them up and says...(FADING)
141. WOMAN: Well, George, we sure appreciate your putting your list here where we all can see it. Now Mr. Dimwhistle...in his store...he doesn't
142. GEORGE: Go easy on Dimwhistle, there...we'll catch on...he's just...
143. WOMAN: He's just going to hang up his price lists where you don't have to tote a ladder and a pair of opra glasses to get at 'em.
144. GEORGE: (SHRUG) Well, I do admit, when you ladies get together, he won't have much of a chance.
145. WOMAN: Well, we just came from meeting, and it's all decided and written up in the minutes that we are going to read these price lists, and check at least five items every shopping day. See this?
146. GEORGE: What's that, now? Looks like a list.
147. WOMAN: It's an anti-inflation grocery list. We each have one.
148. GEORGE: What do you do with it?
149. WOMAN: See here? It's blank. We fill in the blank spaces. When we go shopping we write down what we buy...and over here in this column we put the ceiling price and the selling price. What do you think of that?
150. GEORGE: Looks like a handy way to keep track,
151. WOMAN: Well, it is. We're all going to use 'em. "Anti-inflation grocery list" it's called.

152. GEORGE: If I can just get a word in edgewise, I'd like to say that's going to help me out a lot. I can relax...don't have to worry and wonder if my prices are O.K.

153. WOMAN: Well that's good, George.

154. GEORGE: I do my best to keep an eye on everything and check everything... but by gum and by jupiter, if you ladies come on a prune or a potato that's a fraction of a cent higher...I'll bet you the roof'll sail right off of this store.

PAUSE:

155. GEORGE: That's what I told 'em, Elsie. And you know something?

156. ELSIE: What now?

157. GEORGE: Seems like it's different being a grocer nowadays. I mean, folks were always friendly...always would like to lean up against the counter and talk a spell...but today.

158. ELSIE: They're more friendly, George?

159. GEORGE: Well, they're just more helpful, that's all. And they're frank. They'll walk right up to me and tell me if they think I'm violating price ceilings. You know what's it's like, Elsie? It's like everybody's working for one idea...

160. ELSIE: To stop inflation...

161. GEORGE: That's what it looks like to me.

PAUSE:

162. FREYMAN: And that's our visit to the town of Centerboro, U. S. A.

163. JOHN: You'd be surprised how many towns are cooperating in the Grocer-Consumer Anti-Inflation drive. Schools and clubs and theatres and industries...in thousands of towns all over the country...are getting a big kick out of making a go of this nation-wide campaign.

164. FREYMAN: And the grocer, of course, is just as interested...if not more so, than anyone! Many of them, like George and Elsie of Centerboro... remember what happened right after the last war...when prices soared, and then fell hard.
165. JOHN: Well...seems as though everybody's pulling together...so that it won't happen again.
166. FREYMAN: Johnny, there's an interesting article in this month's issue of Consumers' Guide. Called "Keep Those Prices Down", and it tells how the town of Phillipsburg, New Jersey buckled down and got to work on a Grocer-Consumer Anti-Inflation campaign **that** took the whole town by storm!
167. JOHN: Maybe our listeners would be interested in having a copy.
168. FREYMAN: Oh yes, and maybe they'd like some of those Anti-Inflation grocery lists to use in their own shopping.
169. JOHN: Tell 'em how they can get all this, George Sandofer.
170. SANDOFER: Friends, the November issue of Consumers' Guide magazine, is **yours** free, when you write to CONSUMER TIME, Washington 25, D. C. This issue contains the interesting article entitled "Keep Those Prices Down", which shows you how you can make a go of the Grocer-Consumer Anti-Inflation Campaign...in your community. Included free, when you write for your copy of Consumers' Guide will be a set of grocery lists, for use in your own shopping. Now these ~~Anti-Inflation~~ grocery lists are complete, ready for you to fill in with the food items you buy, and there are ~~columns~~ for you to enter ceiling prices and selling prices. You'll enjoy having and using these convenient Anti-Inflation lists. Remember...they're yours free, plus a copy of Consumers' Guide when you write to CONSUMER TIME, Washington 25, D. C. Be sure to include your name, address and the ~~name~~ of the station to which you are listening. That's CONSUMER TIME, Washington 25, D. C.

171. FREYMAN: Thank you, George Sandofer.
172. JOHN: And what happens on CONSUMER TIME next week, Mrs. Freyman?
173. FREYMAN: Well, Johnny, do you want to be a farmer?
174. JOHN: That's a secret of mine, Mrs. Freyman. Don't tell everybody!
175. FREYMAN: Well, next week on CONSUMER TIME...because we've had so many letter asking us to tell about post-war opportunities in farming...we're going to devote our show to just that.
176. JOHN: Be with us, then, next week....for another edition of...
177. SOUND: CASH REGISTER....MONEY IN TILL
178. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME!
179. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.
180. JOHN: How your money buys a living in wartime.
181. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.
182. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME, written by Christine Kempton, is presented by the War Food Administration through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. This broadcast period for CONSUMER TIME has been made available as a public service.
- This is the National Broadcasting Company.

